

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

S E C R E T DACCA 5356

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: SREF, PINS, PINT, US, BG

SUBJECT: ASYLUM REQUEST FOR PRESIDENT MOSHTAQUE

REF: STATE 261785; DACCA 5322; DACCA 5331

1. I TELEPHONED THE PRESIDENT AT 13:30 LOCAL TIME TODAY BUT SPOKE TO CHASHI INSTEAD WHEN HE TOLD ME IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO REACH THE PRESIDENT AT THAT TIME. DRAWING ON REFTEL, I ASKED HIM TO ASSURE PRESIDENT MOSHTAQUE THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS PERSONAL WELFARE, THAT WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS IN A WAY WHICH WOULD AVOID BLOODSHED APPEARED POSSIBLE, AND THAT PRESIDENT MOSHTAQUE WOULD BE WELCOME IN THE UNITED STATES IF HE DESIRED TO GO THERE. I TOLD HIM THAT HE COULD INFORM THE PRESIDENT THAT, IN KEEPING WITH THE CONVERSATION CHASHI AND I HAD YESTERDAY, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY REFUGE WITHIN EMBASSY TO THE PRESIDENT IF HIS LIFE SHOULD APPEAR TO BE IN IMMINENT DANGER. I SAID FURTHER THAT IF A RESOLUTION WERE NEGOTIATED WHICH INCLUDED SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, WE WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO OFFER THE ASSISTANCE OF ADMITTING THE PRESIDENT AND A SMALL NUMBER OF OTHER OFFICIALS TO OUR DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE TEMPORARILY BEFORE THEY LEFT BANGLADESH.

2. CHASHI SAID HE WAS MOST GRATEFUL FOR THESE ASSURANCES

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AND REPEATED THAT ANY OF THESE ARRANGEMENT WOULD "ALWAYS

BE PART OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL KEEP YOU AWAY FROM EMBARRASSMENT, AND ALSO NATURALLY US." HE SAID THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR OUR GENEROUS RESPONSE.

3. I ASKED CHASHI WHAT HE COULD TELL ME ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION AND THE OUTLOOK. HIS RESPONSE WAS CAUTIOUS AND RESTRAINED. HE SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS BECOMING NORMAL BUT THAT A FEW MORE THINGS WERE YET TO BE SETTLED. I ASKED WHEN HE THOUGHT THE SITUATION WOULD BE NORMALIZED AND HE SIMPLY REPLIED THAT "EVERY LITTLE STEP MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE WE CAN SAY." WAS HE SATISFIED THAT THINGS WERE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, I ASKED, AND HE REPLIED THAT THAT DEPENDED ON A DEFINITION OF THE "RIGHT DIRECTION." HE SAID THAT THINGS WERE SETTLING DOWN AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS AND TO SOLVING THEIR PROBLEMS, A RESPONSE WHICH I TOOK TO MEAN THAT HE THOUGHT A RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS WAS PROBABLY NEAR BUT THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD NOT INCLUDE MOSHTAQUE'S RETENTION OF THE POWER HE WAS EXERCISING BEFORE NOVEMBER 3.

4. I ASKED HIM FINALLY WHETHER HE STILL FELT, AS HE HAD YESTERDAY, THAT THEY WOULD NOT NEED TO UTILIZE THE FACILITIES THEY WERE REQUESTING OF US, AND HE SAID HE DID.

5. COMMENT. CHASHI DID NOT RETURN TO THE QUESTION OF AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT AND I DID NOT REFER TO IT EITHER. IT WAS CLEAR THAT CHASHI WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE WE HAVE MADE, AS THE PRESIDENT WILL ALSO BE.
BOSTER

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